

Talking Points for the DCI
(2 September 1983)

Current Situation in Lebanon

The Eighth Brigade of the Lebanese Army is reportedly moving out of West Beirut in the direction of predominantly Christian East Beirut. Government officials have stated that the Army intends to establish an "effective presence" in Christian areas and to close down Christian militia barracks. [redacted]

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Muslims and Druze are extremely fearful of Christian retaliation following the reported massacres of Christian villagers yesterday. According to press reports, large numbers of Muslims are fleeing the city.

-- Christians throughout East Beirut are participating in a general strike to protest the massacres. [redacted]

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Druze leader Walid Junblatt told our Ambassador in Damascus today that he was prepared to meet with President Gemayel if Gemayel is alone. Junblatt thinks that Nabih Barri and some members of the National Salvation Front would be willing to join the meeting.

-- Junblatt, however, said he did not know how Syria would respond to the prospect of such a meeting. [redacted]

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President Gemayel drafted letters to Syria and the PLO today formally requesting the withdrawal of their respective forces from Lebanon. [redacted]

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US Embassy Beirut reports that anti-American sentiment is running high in West Beirut, fueled by rumors that US Marines fought along side of Lebanese Army units against the Druze and Muslims.

-- No additional US Marine casualties have been reported, but two Marines were killed earlier this week. [redacted]

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The Lebanese Government has urgently requested that the US resupply the Lebanese Army with ammunition as soon as possible. Tank, howitzer, mortar, and other ammunition is involved. [redacted]

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The Beirut press is reporting today that France is willing to hold national reconciliation talks among Lebanese Christian, Muslim, and Druze leaders on the French aircraft carrier Foch, which will soon be stationed off the Lebanese coast. In response to a question from US Embassy Paris, a French Foreign Ministry official confirmed a willingness to use the ship for such talks. [redacted]

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